

28 Jan 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India sends notice to Pak. to amend 1960 Indus pact

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood - relations

Prelims: Facts about Indus Waters Treaty

Mains: Recent developments in India-Pakistan relations

Context

India has recently announced its intentions to modify the 62-year-old Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan.

Indus Water Treaty

- The Indus Waters Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960.
- The Treaty which was brokered by the [World Bank](#) has never been modified since its signing.
- The treaty lays down conditions for the distribution of the waters of the Indus and its tributaries that support agriculture and other economic activities in both countries.
- The Treaty is regarded as one of the most successful international treaties in South Asia which has endured wars and tension between the two countries.

Details

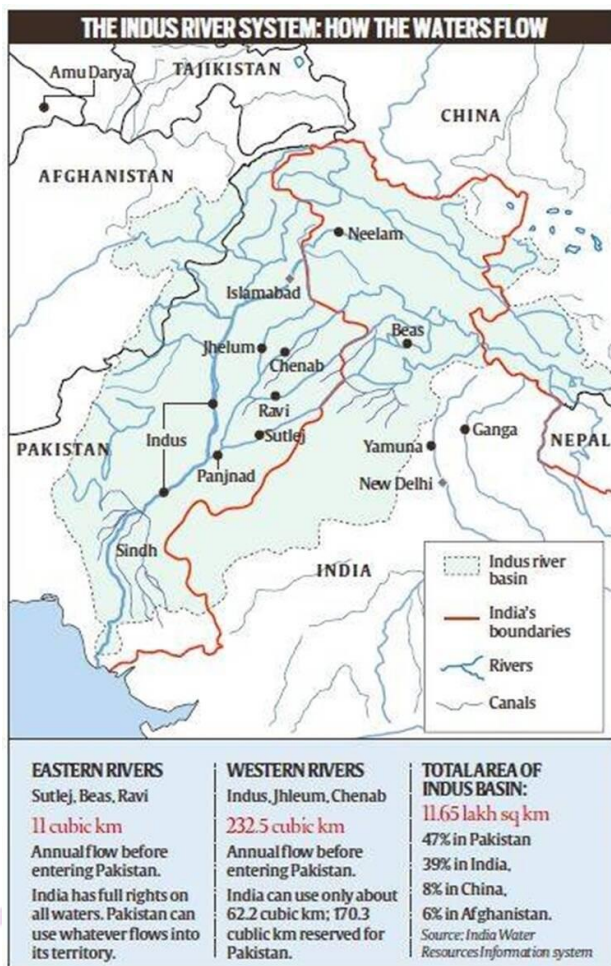


Image Source: Indian Express

- Citing Pakistan's "intransigence" in resolving the stalemate over the construction of Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects in Jammu and Kashmir, India wants to modify the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan.
- India has also raised concerns over Pakistan's "unilateral" move to approach the [Permanent Court of Arbitration](#) at the Hague in the Netherlands.
 - The first hearing of the Pakistani case began in the court on 27th January and India has boycotted the court process.
- India has invoked **Article XII (3)** of the treaty according to which the provisions of the Treaty can be modified from time to time by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two Governments.

Objections raised by Pakistan over Indian projects

- **Kishenganga Project:** In 2006, Pakistan expressed its objections to the construction of the 330 MW Kishenganga hydroelectric project by India on the Jhelum river.

- **Ratle Project:** Pakistan had also raised concerns and objections on the construction of the 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project on the Chenab river.

Dispute resolution process under the treaty

- **Article IX** of the Treaty deals with the “**Settlement of Differences and Disputes**”.
- According to **Article IX**, there are three possible measures that can be undertaken to decide on objections raised by either side which are:
 - Working within the **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** which includes experts from both countries and meets regularly, or.
 - Consulting a World Bank-appointed neutral expert, or.
 - Through a court process with the World Bank and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).
- India has held that each step must be fully exhausted before both sides agree to move on to the next step. However, Pakistan has moved on without waiting for India’s concurrence with respect to the latest issue.
- In 2015, after close to 10 years of deadlock over the construction of projects, Pakistan approached the World Bank to appoint a neutral expert, but later Pakistan changed its stand and moved to the Court of Arbitration.

India’s stand

- As per Indian officials the parallel processes instead of a graded mechanism had led to deadlock and left India with no choice but to demand Pakistan to discuss the amendments to the treaty.
- Further, Indian officials also feel that Pakistan’s actions have adversely violated the provisions of the Treaty and their implementation which has forced India to issue a notice for modification of the Treaty.

Pakistan’s stand

- Pakistan’s Foreign Affairs Ministry (MFA) has said that the Indian reports on the notice were “diversionary” and that Pakistan has taken up the issue with the Court of Arbitration based on the relevant provisions of the treaty.

***Nut graf:** Indus Water treaty is often regarded as a rare example of India-Pakistan consensus and India’s recent decision to issue a notice to Pakistan to amend the Treaty at a time when both the countries have snapped trade, cultural exchanges, and bilateral talks could be a major significant development in their bilateral relations.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Cheetah project to bring in 12 big cats from South Africa

Syllabus: Conservation

Prelims: About Cheetahs

Mains: Re-introduction of Cheetahs in India

Context

India and South Africa have signed a long-pending agreement to translocate 12 cheetahs to India.

Details

- The Cheetahs from South Africa will be transported to India by February-end and reintroduced at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- Eight Cheetahs were brought from Namibia in September 2022 under a similar agreement.
- According to the Environment Ministry, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Reintroduction of Cheetahs to India was signed between India and South Africa.
 - The MoU facilitates cooperation between the two countries to:
 - Establish a viable and secure cheetah population in India
 - Promote conservation and capacity building
 - Ensure sharing and exchange of expertise

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. India's Groundwater Governance

Syllabus: Government Policies & Interventions for Development

Mains: Government Initiatives Related to Groundwater Management.

Context: This article discusses the present groundwater situation in India and various policy interventions regarding groundwater conservation.

Introduction:

- India, with nearly 18% of the world's population, occupies about 2.4% of the total geographical area and consumes 4% of total water resources.
- As per a World Bank report, India with its rapidly growing economy and population is the largest groundwater user.
- [Groundwater](#) is pivotal to India's water security especially for India's agriculture and drinking water security in rural and urban areas, meeting nearly 80% of the country's drinking water and two-thirds of its irrigation needs.
 - According to the Central Ground Water Board, with 230 billion metre cubes of groundwater drawn out each year for irrigating agriculture lands in India, many parts of the country are experiencing rapid depletion of groundwater.
- The Union government is working to achieve the goal of sustainable groundwater management in collaboration with States and Union Territories.

Policy Interventions:

- To achieve sustainable groundwater management, administration has identified certain important deliverables that include,
 - A reduction in groundwater extraction to below 70%
 - Increasing the network of groundwater observation wells
 - Installing digital water level recorders for real-time monitoring
 - Periodic monitoring of groundwater quality
 - Aquifer mapping and data dissemination
 - Better regulation of groundwater extraction by industries and
 - Promotion of participatory groundwater management and periodic groundwater resource assessment.
- In May 2019, [Jal Shakti Ministry](#) was created to give impetus to the management of water resources with special focus on demand and supply management.
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan was launched to transform Jan Shakti into Jal Shakti through asset creation, rainwater harvesting ('Catch the Rain' campaign) and extensive awareness campaign.

Scientific approach:

- Initiatives such as [Atal Bhujal Yojana \(ABY\)](#) and the [National Project on Aquifer Management \(NAQUIM\)](#) have also been taken for the effective management and regulation of groundwater.
- Atal Bhujal Yojana was launched by the Union government with World Bank assistance, for sustainable management of ground water resources with community participation.
 - It looks to inculcate behavioural change made possible by incentivisation.
- NAQUIM envisages the mapping of subsurface water bearing geological formations (aquifers) to help gather authentic data and enable informed decision-making.
 - Around 24 lakh square kilometres of the country has been mapped from the available mappable area of nearly 25 lakh sq. km.
 - Region-wise aquifer management plans are being prepared and shared with States.
- Government is also increasing monitoring stations in India with a special focus on identifying high groundwater extracting industrial and urban clusters and groundwater stressed regions.
- Dynamic groundwater assessments are conducted annually by obtaining samples from fixed locations to check for the presence of heavy and trace metals.
 - A software called 'India-Groundwater Resource Estimation System (IN-GRES)', has been developed.
- Comprehensive groundwater guidelines for regulation in various sectors were implemented in 2022.
- The Process of issuing a no-objection certificate was made transparent and time-bound using a web-based application.
- The findings of the groundwater assessment 2022 indicate a positive inclination in the management of groundwater.
 - There has been a 3% reduction in the number of 'overexploited' groundwater units and a 4% increase in the number of 'safe' category units as compared to 2017.
 - There was an improvement in groundwater conditions in 909 units.
 - There is a reduction in annual extraction (of about 9.53 billion cubic metres); the data for irrigation, industrial and domestic use, respectively, is 208.49 BCM, 3.64 BCM and 27.05 BCM.
 - Overall extraction saw a declining trend, of about 3.25% since 2017.

Way Forward:

- Adequate groundwater resources are necessary for India as one of the fastest growing economies to manage anthropogenic pressures.
- Relevant steps must be taken to make India a water surplus nation and fulfil the objective of a key United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, of water for all.

- Government could ensure source sustainability to provide safe drinking water to all rural households by 2024, under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Groundwater resources must be managed with greater community participation with the help of various government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

***Nut Graf:** In the context of climate change, as uncertainties will increase with connection with groundwater resources, efforts must be made to find solutions that are essential for sustainable development. The government's interventions in enabling a positive impact on the overall groundwater scenario, reflect the spirit of cooperative federalism in managing groundwater.*

Category: POLITY

1. Founding ideals

Syllabus: Indian Constitution

Mains: Relevance of basic values enshrined in the Preamble of Indian Constitution in present time.

Context: The President's address to the nation on the 74th Republic Day Republic day.

Introduction:

- In her first and customary Republic Day address to the nation, President Draupadi Murmu reiterated the founding ideals of the Republic.
- As the first tribal woman to hold the highest office in the country, she exemplified India's ongoing journey of democracy, pluralism, and empowerment of the weaker sections.
- Ms. Murmu underscored this quality of the Republic — the amalgamation of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Pashmina shawls

Syllabus: GS-1; Indian Art and Culture

Prelims: About Pashmina shawls

Context

Kashmir's famous pashmina shawls get a new-age French touch as an Artist turned the fabric into a canvas for contemporary art forms at a Parisian exhibition, in a bid to cater to Western sensibilities.

Pashmina shawls

- Pashmina shawls are known for centuries and are famous for their intricate “buta or paisley patterns”.
- These shawls are made using Pashmina wool which is obtained from the Changthangi goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*) native to the region.
- Pashmina shawls are known for the designs and patterns that are woven. The most popular ones include
 - Buti - small singular flower design
 - Buta - multi floral
 - Khat-rast - stripes that throughout the length of the shawl
 - Badam/ambi/kairi - paisley
 - Cypress - cluster of flowers
- Pashmina shawls are known as “cashmere” in the West and are in great demand.
- In August 2013, Kashmiri Pashmina was given the [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#)

G. Tidbits

1. Rise in waterbird count recorded in Kerala's capital

- The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) of 2023 has indicated a 65% rise in waterbirds in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala which has instilled confidence despite concerns posed by anthropogenic activities.
 - AWC is part of the global **International Waterbird Census (IWC) initiative**.
- Asian Waterbird Census 2023 which is an annual census exercise jointly conducted by WWF-India and the social forestry wing of the Forest Department has enumerated 5,396 birds belonging to 70 species from 11 sites spread across the district.
 - There has been a considerable increase from the bird count of 3,270 birds belonging to 72 species recorded in 2022.
- Apart from a slight decline that was seen in the Poovar estuary and the Punchakkari-Vellayani wetland complex, all the other locations have reported an increasing trend.
- The Punchakkari-Vellayani wetland complex, which is regarded as the birding hub of the Thiruvananthapuram, is witnessing a number of threats which include the dumping of solid waste, shift from paddy cultivation to fertilizer-intensive vegetable cultivation,

noise pollution from crackers used by farmers to scare away birds and a growing trend of wedding and other photo shoots.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Interim Government formed in 1946: (Level – Moderate)

1. The Interim Government was formed from the Constituent Assembly which was elected in August 1946. The election to the Constituent Assembly was not direct and representatives were elected by the provincial assemblies.
2. Ghazanfar Ali Khan was the finance minister of the Interim Government of the Congress and Muslim League.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The Interim Government was formed from the Constituent Assembly which was elected in August 1946.
 - The election to the Constituent Assembly was not direct and representatives were elected by the provincial assemblies.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, **Liaquat Ali Khan** was the Finance Minister of the Interim Government.
 - **Ghazanfar Ali Khan was the Health Minister**

Q2. Which of the following statements is/are correct? (Level – Moderate)

1. Pashmina shawls gained much prominence in the days of the Mughal Empire as objects of rank and nobility.
2. There are two breeds of pashmina goats in India, Chegu and Changthangi.
3. Kashmir Pashmina has been accorded a GI tag.

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Pashmina shawls gained much prominence in the days of the Mughal Empire as objects of rank and nobility.
 - Babur first established the practice of giving khilat – giving ‘robes of honour’.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, There are two breeds of pashmina goats in India, Chegu and Changthangi.
 - Chegu is a unique goat breed found in the cold desert region of western Himalayas.
 - The Changthangi is a breed of cashmere goat native to the high plateaus of Ladakh in northern India
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Kashmiri Pashmina was accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2013.

Q3. The Petrapole-Benapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) will serve to foster greater economic integration and connectivity between India and (Level – Easy)

- A. Bangladesh
- B. Bhutan
- C. Myanmar
- D. Nepal

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Recently, **India and Bangladesh** have agreed to implement 24×7 operationalisation of the Petrapole-Benapole Integrated Check Post (ICP)
- Petrapole (India) - Benapole (Bangladesh) is an important land border crossing for India-Bangladesh both in terms of trade and passenger movement.
- The commissioning of the Petrapole-Benapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) will foster greater economic integration and connectivity between India and Bangladesh.

Q4. With respect to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which of the following statements is/are incorrect? (Level – Difficult)

1. The offences under the act are cognizable and bailable.
2. Child marriages are automatically invalid
3. The Court of Judicial Magistrate of first class or Metropolitan Magistrate can take suo motu cognizance on the basis of any reliable information

Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The offences under the Act are considered to be **cognizable and non-bailable**.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, As per the Act, Every child marriage, whether solemnised before or after the commencement of this Act, shall be voidable at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of the marriage:
 - Provided that a petition for annulling a child marriage by a decree of nullity may be filed in the district court only by a contracting party to the marriage who was a child at the time of the marriage.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The Court of the Judicial Magistrate of the first class or the Metropolitan Magistrate may also take suo motu cognizance on the basis of any reliable report or information.

Q5. Consider the following statements: PYQ (2007) (Level – Difficult)

1. The mode of removal of a Judge of a High Court in India is same as that of removal of a Judge of the Supreme Court.
2. After retirement from the office, a permanent Judge of a High Court cannot plead or act in any court or act in any court or before any authority in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, According to **Article 217** of the Indian Constitution, a High Court Judge in India can be removed from his office by the President in the manner provided in **clause (4) of Article 124** for the removal of a Judge of the Supreme Court.
 - Therefore, the mode of removal of a Judge of a High Court in India is same as that of removal of a Judge of the Supreme Court
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, **Article 217** of the Constitution says that “no person who has held office as a permanent Judge of a High Court shall plead or act in any court or before any authority in India **except the Supreme Court and the other High Courts**”.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [What is the Indus Water Treaty? Discuss the dispute redressal mechanism within it?](#) (15 marks, 150 words) (GS-2; International Relations)
2. [“Groundwater is pivotal to India’s water security”. Elucidate.](#) (10 marks, 150 words) (GS-2; Governance)